

From: Dr. Lawrence P. Reynolds <Larry\_Reynolds@ndsu.nodak.edu>  
To: <feedback@publiclibraryofscience.org>  
Sent: Tuesday, April 10, 2001 1:42 PM  
Subject: PLS boycott and related issues

> An open letter to the members of the PLS Advocacy Group:  
>  
> Concerning your "response to Science magazine's statement regarding [the  
> boycott of scientific publishers] initiative"  
> [www.publiclibraryofscience.org/plosScience.htm](http://www.publiclibraryofscience.org/plosScience.htm)):  
>  
> I find your statements that you are interested only in free and  
> unrestricted access to the scientific literature commendable. I  
> disagree strongly, however, with your proposed means of accomplishing  
> this goal.  
>  
> I find your attempt to impose your views on the rest of the scientific  
> community via a boycott to be the height of absurdity and pomposity. Do  
> you really think that an organization consisting of 12 members should  
> determine the future paradigm for scientific publishing? Are you so  
> enamored with your own views as to think you can do a better job of  
> determining how to provide access to the scientific literature than the  
> more 250 journals, each with their own publications committee, housed by  
> a site such as Stanford's HighWire Press  
> (<http://highwire.stanford.edu/>)?  
>

> Do you really expect PubMed Central to develop and provide all of the  
> searching, interest profiling, linking, etc., that a site such as  
> HighWire Press provides? Who will pay for this effort? It certainly  
> will not be free. If you naively think so, or expect the rest of the  
> scientific community to think so, go to HighWire's web site and take a  
> look at the number of people it takes to maintain such a site!  
>  
> Do you really believe this is a legitimate use of NCBI and NLM funds  
> when sites such as HighWire's already exist? Do you expect PubMed  
> Central to compete with HighWire, who already is one of the world's  
> leaders in on-line publishing as well as future developments in  
> electronic publishing? If not, why are you not proposing to collaborate  
> with HighWire Press and other such sites?  
>  
> For example, HighWire Press, in collaboration with Sun Microsystems and  
> the National Science Foundation, is developing a system to archive  
> electronic publications. This library-based system, termed LOCKSS (Lots  
> of Copies Keep Stuff Safe; <http://lockss.stanford.edu/>), will be the  
> premiere electronic archiving system in the world. Do you expect PubMed  
> Central, the NCBI, or the NLM to duplicate an effort such as this?  
>  
> Wouldn't it be more productive, and more fiscally responsible, to  
> collaborate with sites such as HighWire to ensure "seamless" access to  
> on-line content already available on their site. Or does your agenda go  
> beyond free and unrestricted access to the scientific literature? Are  
> you intimidated by a not for profit site such as HighWire Press, which  
> is currently publishing more than 250 journals on-line, when PubMed  
> Central currently publishes only eight?  
>  
> As chair of the Publications Committee for the Society for the Study of  
> Reproduction (publishers of Biology of Reproduction), I find your  
> boycott a clear attempt to ram your views down my throat. As a  
> scientist, I always suspect that such attempts come at best from  
> individuals whose ideas are not well thought out or supported by  
> data, and at worst from a self-serving interest in promoting one's own  
> views to the exclusion of others. Given your rhetoric and actions, I  
> find no reason to alter this suspicion in this case.  
>  
> Your clear implication that not for profit scientific societies are  
> somehow hiding their finances is offensive, and should be offensive to  
> the many, like me, who volunteer their time to ensure the continued  
> success of their societies. I, for one, will continue to fight your  
> proposals as long as you continue to insult the ideas, integrity, and  
> intentions of those of us who disagree with you, and as long as you feel  
> compelled to resort to such tactics to support your own views.  
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> #####  
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